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ABSTRACT

This proposal for the creation of a Department of Education, a Council of Educational Advisers, and a Joint Education Committee, is based on the conviction that only such major steps will give education the strength of status it requires in the federal structure. Education tomorrow will be bigger in every way and, with present methods, it is possible to chart the rate of growth of educational institutions in a number of areas, but simply encouraging growth along present lines will not be enough. New ways of looking at a future that will be not only bigger but different must be encouraged, and means through which innovative ideas can be incorporated into our educational systems must be created. (Author/GO)

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Proposal for a Department of Education, a Council of Educational Advisers, and an Education Report to Congress to be Received by a Joint Congressional Committee

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SUMMARY

For a number of years there have been proposals to transform the Office of Education into a Department of Education which would provide:

- greater influence for the federal educational arm within the hierarchy of other federal programs;
- the possibility of pulling together some of the federal programs in support of education that are now in other departments.

This memorandum proposes the establishment of such a Department as one step in a series of decisive actions by the President and the Congress which would give education the priority it needs to meet the urgent needs of today. The proposal is that Congress establish:

1. A declaration of policy which explicitly states the federal government's responsibility for extending and improving educational opportunity.
2. Authorization for an annual Education Report by the President to the Congress, setting forth:

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- The extent of educational opportunities in the United States, their quality, and the improvements needed to carry out national policy.
- Current and foreseeable trends in education.
- A review and assessment of federal education programs during the preceding year.
- A program for carrying out policy more effectively, plus recommendations for appropriate legislation.

3. A Department of Education, headed by a Secretary of Cabinet rank who would have <u>specifically designated responsibility for coordinating all federal activities in the support of education</u>.

4. A Council of Educational Advisers, reporting to the Secretary of Education, and charged with helping him evaluate educational trends, appraise federal programs, and formulate others in line with national policy.

5. A Joint Committee of the Congress on Education, composed of the senior members of the Senate and House committees concerned with education, and charged with:

   - Receiving and studying the President's annual Education Report.
   - Submitting each year to the Senate and the House its own findings and recommendations on the main points of the President's report.
   - Conducting studies of important educational issues.

There actions could well be embodied in an Education Act of 1970. They could also be enacted in separte pieces of legislation although probably with a substantial dimunition of force.

FURTHER DETAILS

1. Declaration of policy

The purpose would be for Congress to declare in formal fashion that it has a broad national policy with respect to education. Despite much education legislation, a broad national policy has not yet been established.

The declaration might begin with the recognition that the nation's general well-being, its economic growth, its strength and freedom, and the quality of every citizen's life are inextricably bound up with the quality and extent of the education the nation provides. Education is, in short, a major national resource. Therefore, the declaration might continue, the Congress conceives it to be the continuing policy and responsibility of the federal government, consistent with the constitutional rights, the privileges, and the duties of the states, to create and maintain conditions which will provide appropriate opportunities, including self-education, for those able and wanting to learn; and to encourage the development of such conditions by assisting federal, state, local, and institutional planning agencies in their efforts toward this end.

2. Education Report

Having declared a national policy, the Congress should then require an annual Education Report by the President of the United States. This report, prepared in consultation with appropriate officers of the Executive and Legislative branches, would be transmitted to Congress shortly after the beginning of each regular session. It would set forth:

A. The extent of educational opportunities in the United States, their quality, and improvements needed to carry out the national policy as declared by Congress;

B. Current and foreseeable trends in education;

C. Review of the education program of the federal government during the preceding year and its effect upon educational opportunities in this country;

D. A program for carrying out the declaration of policy, together with such recommendations for legislation as were deemed necessary or desirable. The President could also transmit supplementary reports to the Congress from time to time, covering any additional or revised recommendations.

3. Department of Education headed by a Secretary of cabinet rank

A Secretary of Education sitting with the Cabinet could forcefully project the educational needs of the nation and the requisite role therein of the federal government. The elevation of education to a seat in the Cabinet would strengthen the advocacy within the federal government of education's needs, and by ensuring better coordination, would help to encourage more effective planning for educational development throughout the country; specifically, the Secretary would be the federal government official who would:

- act as the principal federal officer responsible for the coordination of all federal programs in support of education, especially in his role as chairman of the Federal Interagency Committee on Education.

- assist and advise the President in the preparation of the Education Report.

- gather timely and authoritative information on developments and trends in education, establishing indicators that would measure these trends and developments against needs, analyzing and interpreting such information in the light of national policy,

and conducting appropriate studies.

- develop and recommend to the President national policies which will foster additional educational opportunities for the people of this country.

- furnish such studies, reports, and recommendations on matters of federal educational policy and legislation as the President may request.

- encourage the development of common guidelines and standards for data collection and reporting, and for institutional and statewide planning to be followed by educational institutions and by state and federal government agencies concerned with education.

4. Council of Educational Advisers

In order for the Department of Education to bring the country's great diversity of educational effort into a scheme of national activity, the Congress should include in the legislation establishing a Department of Education the creation of a Council of Educational Advisers, to report to the Secretary of Education.

The Council should be composed of from three to seven members appointed by the Secretary, to serve full time, at a salary

sufficient to attract highly qualified people. Ideally they should be educational statesmen of the first rank (not all professional educators), beholden to no constituency whether institutional or organizational. Each council member should, by virtue of his experience and attainments, be exceptionally equipped to analyze and interpret developments in education, to appraise federal programs in the light of national policy, and to formulate and recommend programs and policies to the Secretary.

5. Joint Committee

To ensure that Congress acquires a full and balanced picture of educational conditions and needs, a Joint Committee on Education should be created composed of the senior members of the Senate and House committees concerned with education. The chief function of this Joint Committee would be to make a continuing study of issues raised by the proposed Education Report by the President of the United States, to file an annual report with the Senate and House of Representatives of its findings and recommendations with respect to the main points of the President's report, and to make such other educational reports and recommendations as it deems advisable.

CONCLUSION

The proposal for the creation of a Department of Education, a Council of Educational Advisers, and a Joint Education Committee, is based on the conviction that only such major steps will give

education the strength and status it requires in the federal structure. Education tomorrow will be bigger in every way. We can, with present methods, chart the rate of growth of our institutions in a number of areas, but simply encouraging growth along present lines will not be enough. We must encourage new ways of looking at a future that will be not only bigger but different. And having encouraged innovation, we must create the means through which innovative ideas can make their way into the mainstream of our educational systems.

January 12, 1970